

## SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

### Moving gov mugs requires kid gloves

**Portraits: Will the plan to relocate paintings pass conventional muster?**

By Rebecca Walsh  
The Salt Lake Tribune

In state government, few things are more sensitive than building space - top floor vs. basement, window or no window.

Throw in the touchy subject of the governor's portrait and you have a potential political bomb.

Treading gingerly into treacherous Capitol Hill territory, a group of artists, architects and state lawmakers Tuesday approved tentative plans to move official portraits of Utah's 15 governors from the second to the first floor, creating a "Hall of Governors."

There are practical reasons for the move - better climate control, filtering of ultraviolet light, fewer holes in

newly restored marble walls and more room for new portraits. Still, Capitol Curator Judith McConkie acknowledged the decision poses a "conundrum." Some might consider the new location a demotion in the hierarchy of Capitol real estate.

Until the building closed last year for restoration and a seismic upgrade, the governors' portraits were hung in the building's main floor - the second - along the walls under the rotunda. Now, each of 15 portraits - from Heber Wells to Olene Walker - will hang one floor down.

Besides allowing crews to patch the gray Georgia marble sheets lining the second-floor walls and creating a better physical environment for the art, the new space leaves room for another 10 portraits. Capitol managers considered stacking or rotating the paintings before settling on moving the whole collection.

"We have run out of room," says Capitol Architect David Hart.

In recent years, the portraits have become political hot potatoes. Superstitious governors have refused to hang paintings of still-living predecessors in the governor's office. Former Gov. Mike Leavitt commissioned two portraits because he reportedly did not like his expression in the first. It now hangs at Southern Utah University.

Former Gov. Olene Walker's portrait, featuring Utah's only female governor standing in the Governor's Mansion ballroom holding a children's book, has just been completed. The portraits range in value from \$10,000 to \$30,000, depending on the artist.

The state paid \$23,000 for William Whitaker to paint Walker's likeness. The portrait of J. Bracken Lee, Utah's ninth governor, has the lowest appraised value: \$10,000. The highest value, \$30,000, is appraised for the portraits of Govs. Cal Rampton and Scott Matheson, both painted by artist Alvin Gittins.

Some of the paintings are temporarily boxed up. Others hang in the new state office building behind the Capitol. The portraits will be shipped to Denver for restoration - at a cost of \$23,700 each - before being rehung when the building reopens in 2008.

Despite the possibility of hurt feelings from former governors, their family members or historical sticklers, committee members insist the new Hall of Governors will do the portraits justice.

"It's going to be one of the most important parts of the building," said Jordan Tanner, a former legislator and member of the art placement subcommittee.

The panel's recommendation will have to be approved by the full Capitol Preservation Board, which includes Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr.'s chief of staff, Jason Chaffetz. Huntsman, Utah's 16th governor, has yet to commission his portrait.

## SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

### Capitol renovation reaches a turning point

After all the tearing away, it is now time to start adding the first quake-safe footings

By Matt Canham  
The Salt Lake Tribune

Think of a series of jacks supporting a car that weighs 138 million pounds. That's the state Capitol right now, and it doesn't need a simple tire change - it needs 265 earthquake-resistant stabilizers.

Crews are expected to install the first stabilizer today, marking a milestone in the \$200 million renovation project and the start of a yearlong seismic retrofit that will ultimately allow the symbol of state government to withstand a 7.3-magnitude quake.

But until all of the stabilizers are in place, the Capitol reconstruction is entering its most dangerous phase. The 90-year-old structure would suffer serious damage if an earthquake shook Utah while the building is being supported only by temporary props.

Engineer Jerod Johnson calls it the "window of vulnerability."

Johnson's crew has designed a plan to strategically install the stabilizers - which they call base isolators - to provide the most support.

They are called isolators because they actually isolate the building from the earth. They will sit on a new slab of concrete that will cover the entire footprint of the building. On top of the isolators is a series of concrete beams that are connected to the columns holding up the Capitol.

The isolators resemble a large layer cake, but instead of frosting and pastry, it is made with rubber and steel. They are 4 feet wide and 20 inches deep. And once in place, the building could sway as much as 2 feet in any direction.

To allow for such movement, construction crews will create a 3-foot underground moat around the building that will be covered with steel, earth and grass.

Johnson equates the entire stabilizing system to a common motor mount, which absorbs the vibrations of an engine without shaking the entire car.

Few buildings have such seismic protection. The first historic building in the nation to sit on the rubber and steel drums is the City-County Building in downtown Salt Lake City, which rests on 447 isolators installed in the late 1980s.

The considerable weight of buildings like the City-County Building and the Capitol is part of the reason the isolators work. The weight stops most up and down movement but allows for side-to-side sway.

Johnson says if a building of similar size to the Capitol were built today, it would weigh less than half its 138 million pounds. Once the inside is completely refurbished in late 2007, the building will weigh close to 165 million pounds.

The Capitol architect, David Hart, looks at Friday's installation of the first isolator in a philosophical way.

He says it is "the first opportunity to put something back, rather than all of this effort to take things away."

Since September, construction workers have gutted the building. But the seismic retrofit starts the effort to restore it.

So far, Hart reports that the project is a little ahead of schedule and on budget. "By and large, things look great."

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## **SALT LAKE TRIBUNE**

### **Old Again: High-tech updates aside, Utah's Capitol is being restored to its former splendor**

By Rebecca Walsh  
The Salt Lake Tribune

Utah's Capitol is a mess.

Tractors crawl out of a hole in the ground, hauling rubble to the surface. A coat of choking dust filters through a cage of scaffolding in the marble Rotunda.

But a glimpse of the genteel past peaks out from underneath layers of cream, teal and rose paint in the House of Representatives' lounge. With fiberglass dropped ceilings and false walls and floors stripped out, the original olive-green silk wall covering still hangs - a bit tattered, but a clue to the finer trappings of the seat of state government when it first opened 90 years ago.

Surrounded by the demolition incidental to shoring up the building to withstand an earthquake, a squad of "history detectives" is painstakingly picking away at the remnants of decades of well-meaning but slapdash repairs, cover-ups and technology upgrades. Their interest is more than academic - focusing on the goal of restoring the building to its former splendor.

"We're really lucky," says Carice Pingenot. "Fundamentally, [past Capitol workers] were really lazy. When they remodeled, they didn't take anything down."

So crews ripping out fluorescent lights and sheetrock found ornate milk-glass light fixtures and plaster cornices - along with a mummified rat, old newspapers, whiskey bottles and several pairs of leather shoes, worse for the wear.

Finished in 1915 at a cost of \$2.7 million, Utah's Capitol has aged gracefully, but not well. The prospect of a moderate earthquake threatens to shake the building 48 inches back and forth. And the air-conditioning ducts, aluminum windows and once-trendy paint have obscured the building's historic integrity. Gutting the Capitol to shore it up provided a convenient opportunity to restore a more authentic interior.

The eye candy of the \$212 million Capitol restoration is secondary to its structural support. But when the building reopens in 2007, the earthquake-proof base isolators under the basement and the steel beams in the rotunda will be hidden from view. Paint, plaster and artwork will be the public face of the building. The two simultaneous preservation efforts - structural and aesthetic - complement each other.

"Base isolation minimizes the loss of the historic fabric of the building," says Burtch Beall, the architect who managed the restoration and seismic improvements of the Salt Lake City-County Building in the 1980s. "The Capitol represents a period of growth and development. There's a character there that we no longer are able to produce."

Figuring out what the building looked like back then is part sleuthing, part interior design. Historic preservation specialists with Capitol Restoration Group - three architecture firms collaborating on the restoration - have gathered photographs, letters and newspaper articles to decipher the decoration. They've climbed around the building on scaffolding and ladders, rubbing away layer after layer of paint and cutting out chunks of plasterwork for microscopic inspection. Each of 5,500 painted limestone panels plastered on the walls and columns of the first floor were numbered, mapped and stored in a warehouse for eventual remounting.

Because Utah's Capitol design was the result of a turn-of-the-century competition, workers have found numerous photographs and drawings of the building. But the laziness of those long-ago workers, new technology and the relative youth of Utah's Capitol also aid the investigation.

"Your building has been well cared for," says Bob Loversidge, CEO of Ohio-based Skulley Caldwell Architects, one of the restoration partners. "It's been modified. Significant character has been lost in some areas. But it's been respected and well-maintained. It's pretty intact compared to some other buildings we look at."

Contractors from New York to Denver will interpret what Utah workers find, rebuilding \$10,000 light fixtures and reproducing wall silks. About \$27 million has been set aside for finishing the interior of the building.

Decorative painters will painstakingly replicate ornate stenciling and pinstriping Pingetot stripped and traced to find shades of ochre and sage in the attorney general's office, governor's board room and old Supreme Court.

Murals inside the building - including a cyclorama of murals hung in 1934 as a Works Progress Administration project - have been covered with acid-free plastic sheets and foam core. Humidity and temperature meters transmit numbers to construction trailers 24 hours a day. Workers still are trying to determine whether a half-inch wide outline of black paint on the murals was original or added later.

The 200 free-hanging paintings, portraits and sculptures that grace the Capitol's halls and rotunda - the so-called "Alice Collection," named for Alice Merrill Horne, the first woman elected to the state Legislature - have been catalogued and stored in a warehouse. One by one, they will be sent to Denver for conservation.

All the artwork will be cleaned and restored. When the building is opened, the collection will be more closely monitored and maintained.

"It will be managed like a historic site, rather than just a building that has been allowed to just kind of put things up willy-nilly," says Judith McConkie, Capitol curator.

In addition to surface changes, a few historic structural features will be restored. A glass floor underneath the rotunda will replace terrazzo installed in the 1930s or 1940s. And a granite terrace and elliptical walkway planned by original architect Richard Kletting finally will be built around the sides and front of the building.

Some things have been lost or will be difficult to replicate or replace. Fixing broken granite on the building's exterior is a dicey prospect because the Little Cottonwood Canyon quarry is closed. State leaders are negotiating with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to dip into the church's cache of stone. Many of the limestone blocks on the first floor broke as they were removed, forcing crews to replace them with plaster. And with each successive renovation, workers took light fixtures home.

"They're probably hanging in someone's living room," says David Hart, Capitol Preservation director. "There is some stuff that has been done that is irreversible. The key is to reverse what we can. We're going back to what was originally constructed - to the best of our ability."

Despite the popularity of do-it-yourself interior design shows and the PBS series "This Old House," the Capitol preservationists are braced for some resistance from workers and politicians - particularly to the darker, earth-tone colors.

Longtime House Clerk Carole Peterson worries the building will revert back to a tan shade that covered everything when she first started working at the Capitol 30 years ago. She liked the pink-and-green House Chambers, circa a 1995-96 restoration, that others have panned.

"It was so drab in here," Peterson says. "When it's drab, you get depressed. The tan was depressing to me."

But State Historic Preservation Officer Wilson Martin believes Utahns will approve when the building reopens. He is consulted on each preservation decision and wholeheartedly endorses the project.

"We're on the verge of being able to have a Capitol building that shows the strengths and vitalities of our state," Martin says. "This building will show we respect our history. We respect our traditions. We value our heritage."